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C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 002388

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [BH](#) [GT](#)

SUBJECT: BELIZEAN DATT ON BORDER DISPUTE

Classified By: Robert E. Copley for reason 1.5 (b).

1. (C) PolOff met with Lt. Col. Omar L. Pulido, Belizean Defense Attache in Guatemala, at his request, on September 9.

Pulido wanted our readout on whether the future of the confidence building measures had been affected by Guatemala's rejection of the OAS facilitator's proposals. Pulido said President Portillo's message at the September 3 Summit, that the door to negotiations was "still open," was well received in Belize although several political factions are looking for ways to impose costs on Guatemala for rejecting the proposals. PolOff informed Pulido that the Embassy had expressed keen disappointment to GOG officials and conveyed to him the assurances we have received regarding Guatemalan interest in maintaining and even expanding the confidence building measures.

2. (C) Pulido indicated that he and Belizean Ambassador Martinez had made an effort to get to know the realities of the border region and had met with Padre Salvador Crutzel, the crusading priest whose comments on alleged Belizean Defense Force atrocities get frequent play in Guatemalan media. Pulido indicated he was surprised and relieved to find Crutzel a pragmatic interlocutor seeking solutions for the daily problems of his parish. The Belizean Embassy is working with Crutzel in hopes of developing a dialogue with Guatemalan peasants in the Adjacency Zone. Note: FM Gutierrez told the Ambassador September 10 he had also met with Crutzel who said he may be leaving his parish. End Note.

3. (C) On another positive note, Pulido said that for the first time ever, the Embassy of Belize in Guatemala was going to celebrate Belizean Independence on September 19. Pulido hoped the event would be a low-key success that would serve to demonstrate continued progress in the Belizean-Guatemalan relationship.

HAMILTON